

THE WASATCH MILITIA

The early years of Wasatch County were years of wildest romance and adventure. The purpose of the first settlers to establish a homesite in a forboding area was memorable. In the main these early people were not farmers, but good farmers they became. They were not military men but soldiers they had to be. Days were times to be cautious and darkness was a fearsome thing. Every rock or tree or gully was a possible screen for a savage Red Man intent on plunder or murder.

By the spring of 1866 many settlers had joined the 1859-60 people and thriving settlements were established in fertile parts of the valley. If only the Indians had been less warlike the pioneers could have been very happy. Crops had been grown; contrary to first predictions. Stout hearts were determined that Heber Valley also should "blossom as the rose."

On May 1, 1866 several companies of fighting men were mustered into service by Mayor John W. Witt, who was commanding officer of the Wasatch Militia. The County was divided into six divisions with officers to command each section. John Hamilton and Sidney Epperson held the rank of Major. John Crook, David Van Wagoner and Charles H. Wilcken were Battalion Adjts.

As the summer of 1866 advanced more men joined the army while the families from the out-lying places moved into Heber for protection.